

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Amend claims: 1-19.

1. (Currently Amended) A process ~~Process~~ to prepare a base oil having a viscosity index of between 80 and 140 starting ~~from~~ with a feedstock that is either a distillate or a de-asphalted oil by

- (a) contacting the feedstock in the presence of hydrogen with a sulphided hydrodesulphurisation catalyst comprising nickel and tungsten on an acid amorphous silica-alumina carrier; and
- (b) performing a pour point reducing step on the effluent of step (a) to obtain the base oil.

2. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 1, wherein the sulphided hydrodesulphurisation catalyst has a hydrodesulphurisation activity of higher than 30%, wherein the hydrodesulphurisation activity is expressed as the yield in weight percentage of C₄-hydrocarbon cracking products when thiophene is contacted with the catalyst under standard hydrodesulphurisation conditions, wherein the standard conditions consist of contacting a hydrogen-thiophene mixture with 200 mg of a 30-80 mesh catalyst at 1 bar and 350 °C, wherein the hydrogen rate is 54 ml/min and the thiophene concentration is 6 vol% in the mixture.

3. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 2, wherein the hydrodesulphurisation activity of the catalyst is lower than 40%.

4. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim ~~claim~~ 3, ~~any one of claims 1-3-~~ wherein the hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is obtained in a process wherein nickel and tungsten were impregnated on the acid amorphous silica-alumina carrier in the presence of a chelating agent.

5. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 4, ~~any one of claims 1-4~~ wherein the alumina content of the hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is between 10 and 60 wt% as calculated on the carrier alone.
6. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 5, ~~any one of claims 1-5~~ wherein the silica-alumina carrier has an n-heptane cracking test value of between 310 and 360 °C, wherein the cracking test value is obtained by measuring the temperature at which 40 wt% of n-heptane is converted when contacted, under standard test conditions, with a catalyst consisting of said carrier and 0.4 wt% platinum.
7. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 6, wherein the silica-alumina carrier has an n-heptane cracking test value of between 320 and 350 °C.
8. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 7, ~~any one of claims 1-7~~ wherein the catalyst comprises between 2-10 wt% nickel and between 5-30 wt% tungsten.
9. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 8, ~~any one of claims 1-8~~ wherein the surface area of the hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is between 200 and 300 m²/g.
10. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 9, ~~any one of claims 1-9~~ wherein the total pore volume of the hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is above 0.4 ml/g.
11. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 10, ~~any one of claims 1-~~ wherein between 5 and 40 volume percent of the total pore volume of the hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is present as pores having a pore diameter of more than 350 Å.
12. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 11, ~~any one of claims 1-11~~ wherein the feedstock in step (a) contains more than 700 ppm sulphur.

13. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 12, ~~any one of claims 1-14~~ wherein the feed to step (a) is first subjected to a hydrodesulphurisation step prior using the feed in step (a) when preparing a base oil having a viscosity index of greater than 120.

14. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 13, ~~any one of claims 1-13~~ wherein the catalyst in step (a) comprises between 0.1 and 8 wt% of a molecular sieve.

15. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 14, wherein the molecular sieve is zeolite Y, ultrastable zeolite Y, ZSM-12, zeolite beta or mordenite molecular sieve.

16. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 15, ~~any one of claims 1-15~~ wherein step (b) is performed by means of solvent dewaxing.

17. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 15, ~~any one of claims 1-15~~ wherein step (b) is performed by means of catalytic dewaxing.

18. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 17, wherein the dewaxing catalyst is selected from the group consisting of a catalyst composition A comprising a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-12, a catalyst composition B comprising a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-22, and a catalyst composition C comprising a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-23.

19. (Currently Amended) The process ~~Process~~ according to claim 18, wherein the dewaxing catalyst is a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-12.